

RELIEF

FOR

West-Indian Distress,

SHEWING THE

INEFFICIENCY OF PROTECTING DUTIES
ON EAST-INDIA SUGAR,

AND POINTING OUT

OTHER MODES OF CERTAIN RELIEF.

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RELIEF FOR WEST-INDIAN DISTRESS.

THE equalization of the duty upon East and West India Sugar has hitherto been too generally considered, by those who have not thought much about it, as a question merely between the East and West Indians, in which whatever the one gained the other would lose ; but in which, whatever the result may be, the country has no interest. This will be found to be a very erroneous opinion. It is, indeed, admitted by the West Indians, that the preference which they have in the home market, under present circumstances, is "of little benefit to them,"—and it may be proved, that even the hopes that it may be so hereafter have no good foundation ; whilst, by adhering to the present regulations, the important benefit to be derived from an unrestrained trade to India, now become sufficiently obvious, would be injuriously affected.

The protections claimed by the West Indians are of two distinct kinds.

1st. A bounty on the export of the surplus, by which the price is raised about 6s. per cwt.

2d. The monopoly of the home-market with respect to Foreign sugar, and a high duty on that from British India.

With respect to the first, and by very far the most important, the two interests are in no degree opposed to each other ; on the contrary, the East Indians participate in the advantage, in so far as it tends to increase the price of fine sugar ; but against them both is directly opposed the interest of the country at large. This tax on the country has no support whatever on the ground of right ; nor can it be defended as according with sound policy or common sense.

Whether a bounty, to encourage the flow of capital into particular channels, can ever be advantageous, may be matter of much doubt ; but it can never be justified excepting where it affords the prospect of repayment in some future advantage to the country. This bounty, however, upon the exportation of refined sugar, is one which stops the progress of improvement, tends to perpetuate a bad and impolitic system, and must be a tax on the country so long as it shall continue. Moreover, whilst the only obstacle to the unlimited extension of the export of British manufactures is the difficulty of obtaining returns which we can consume at home, we are in this instance giving a bounty to send away the very returns we want, by raising the price, and thereby lessening our own consumption, at the same time lowering the price and increasing the consumption, and thereby extending the commerce, of our

neighbours and our rivals. The country has been paying directly from the revenue, a sum of not less than 250,000*l.* per annum, upon the average of some years past, which has had no other effect than this. Such a master-piece of impolicy and folly, when once understood, cannot long be endured; and therefore it will be proper to enter more at length into an explanation of this point.

As the terms Drawback and Bounty may not be understood by those who are not familiar with commercial transactions, it may be proper to explain, that a Drawback means, as the term implies, a drawing back, or receiving on the exportation of any article of foreign growth, the duty, either in whole or in part, which had been paid upon it on importation; this is a direct drawback: sometimes it is given by way of compensation for direct or indirect taxes imposed on manufactures; and then, though called a bounty, it is strictly speaking only a drawback, and is a judicious provision, inasmuch as, whilst it does not tend to enhance the price of the article to the English consumer, it enables the manufacturer more successfully to compete with his foreign rivals, whose trade may not be so fettered by taxation. When, however, the amount drawn back on exportation exceeds either the direct tax paid on importation, as in the case of refined sugar, or that which is added to the cost of the article, by means of direct or indirect taxation, it becomes a Bounty.

British Plantation sugar, when sold in bond,

or without payment of duty, is from 5*s.* to 7*s.* per cwt. dearer than Foreign sugar of similar quality. Under such circumstances, no raw sugar can be sold for exportation; and as the Foreign refiner, who can buy either British or Foreign sugar, has therefore an advantage over the British refiner for exportation, the latter must have an indemnity for the higher price which he gives for his raw material, or he could not carry on the trade. This indemnity he receives in the bounty which is paid on the exportation of his goods; which induces him to give so much more for the raw sugar, thus raising the price of all British Plantation sugar.

The following table was the first which I adopted for shewing the amount of the Bounty paid upon the exportation of refined sugar.

112 lbs. of Raw Sugar, pays duty on im-				
portation	L.1	7	0	
And produces, when refined,				
61 lbs. Refined Sugar, which on				
exportation receives 46 <i>s.</i>				
per cwt.	25 <i>s.</i> $\frac{6}{10}d.$			
22 lbs. Bastards, which, if ex-				
ported, would receive 30 <i>s.</i>				
per cwt.	5 <i>s.</i> $10\frac{7}{10}d.$			
24 lbs. Molasses, which pay on				
importation 10 <i>s.</i> per cwt... 2 <i>s.</i> $1\frac{7}{10}d.$				
5 lbs. Waste.	—	—	—	1 13 1
112 Bounty received on exportation, more				
than paid on importation	0	6	1	

Some objections having been made to this table, I have been led to a closer investigation of

the subject. The result is a discovery, that the bounty, instead of being lower than I had stated, is higher.

It has been objected, that the molasses are not exported, nor would there be any bounty on their exportation. This is wholly immaterial, because they are allowed to come into consumption without payment of the duty, to which they would be subject if imported from the West Indies ; and if this argument were worth any thing, why not extend it to the bastards, which are seldom if ever exported ; though, if they were, they would receive in drawback and bounty 30s. per cwt.? The reason is obvious ; for if it had been so extended, it would have appeared that there was not received back as much as was paid, and thus the fallacy of the whole argument would have been exposed.

The preceding table was formed upon the supposition, that, as the law allowed a drawback and bounty of 30s. per cwt., upon the exportation of the bastards, they were really exported. They are, however, on the contrary, almost entirely taken off by the demand from the home market ; and consequently it must be admitted, that the advantage to the refiner is only the home-consumption duty of 27s. per cwt. This, upon the principle of the foregoing table, reduces the bounty there stated from 6s. 1d. to 5s. 6d. per cwt.

As the bastards and the molasses are returned again upon the home market, the bounty thus paid has only lessened the quantity of sugar in the country,

By exportation	61 lbs.
By Waste in the process	5
And by converting into Molasses 24 lbs. which, if value be a fair criterion, we may say has lessened the quantity*	12
	<hr/>
	78 lbs.

From this it appears, that for every 112 lbs. of sugar which, by the operation of this measure, the refiner has been enabled to export, the country has paid 7s. 10½d., as will be more clearly illustrated by the following statement.

The export of refined sugar reduced to raw, is stated, by returns to Parliament, to have been, in the last year, 637,132 cwts. In that statement one ton of refined sugar is considered to be equal to thirty-four hundreds weight of raw sugar; consequently the actual export of refined sugar was 18,739 tons. The drawback and bounty paid upon the exportation of common refined sugar, of which our exports almost entirely consist, is 46s. per cwt.; consequently there was paid to the refiner, upon the above quantity of 18,739 tons, the sum of L. 861,994

* If the whole quantity of molasses returned upon the home market was taken, it would make the bounty larger: but as they do go in part to lessen a demand which must otherwise be supplied by raw sugar, they ought to be taken into account in the way which I have stated; the value of this article being about half that of raw sugar.

According to the first table given, it requires 112 lbs. of raw sugar to make 61 lbs. of refined. The quantity of raw sugar, therefore, which the refiner would have to take out of the market, in the first instance, would be 34,406 tons, on which, the duty being 27*s.* per cwt., he would pay to the Revenue the sum of *L.* 928,692

Out of this quantity, the refiner brings again into the home market 22 lbs. of bastards, for every 112 lbs. of raw sugar, or 6,758 tons, on which the duty, at 27*s.* per cwt., would amount to *L.* 182,466

He further obtains 24 lbs. of Molasses out of every 112 lbs. of raw sugar, which is likewise brought into the home market: this would be 7,372 tons. On this article the duty, if imported, would be 10*l.* per ton or *73,720*

Leaving the net duty really paid on this operation of refining for exportation *L. 672,776*

It has been shewn above, however, that the sum which has been received back by the exporter is 861,994*l.* Consequently the difference, 189,218*l.*, is an excess or bounty; being so much more received back on exportation, than had been paid in duty on importation. The whole quantity

of sugar taken out of the market in the first instance was, as above stated, 34,406 tons.

Bastards returned upon the home market	6,758 tons.
Molasses returned upon the home-market, 7,372 tons, which, if we take value as a criterion, will be equal to half the quantity of raw sugar, or	3,686 tons.
	<hr/>
	10,444 tons.

Leaving the quantity of raw sugar really taken from the Stock in the home market	<hr/> <u>23,962 tons.</u>
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It is, therefore, clear, that in the operation of exporting 23,962 tons of sugar, a bounty amounting to 189,216*l.* has been given, or 7*s.* 10*½d.* per cwt., as has been stated above.

But it may be asked, if the refiners actually received a bounty of 7*s.* 10*½d.* per cwt. should they not be able to give so much more than foreign refiners can afford to give for foreign sugar? By no means; the sugar, as refined for exportation, is not made to suit the consumer, but to obtain the bounty, and has to go through a second process on the Continent. If it was made to suit the consumer, the consumer must pay the refiner a profit; but it is made to suit the bounty; and out of the bounty, therefore, they must have their profit. This refining business, as it now stands, is a forced business, nursed up by bounties. Like the business of the West-India planters, which

is managed by agents and overseers, this business is in a great measure conducted by German managers. And what has all this nursing done for it? Nothing: it is rapidly going to decay. What other trades in the country are so bad as those which are fed by bounties and monopolies? The agriculturists, it is true, have a monopoly of the British market; but they have no export bounty. It might have been supposed that all thinking men, from seeing the effects, would have had enough of monopolies and bounties, even if the people were not tired of paying for them.

If some plan could be adopted for giving to the British refiner the choice of all kinds of sugar, he would have a far greater choice than any Foreign refiner could have. And why should we not supply the Continent with refined sugar, to suit the consumers, as well as with manufactured cotton? A liberty to refine foreign sugar in bond, and an abolition of the bounty, would place both the West-India planters and the refiners on a solid foundation: instead of looking for bounties and monopolies, they would look to their own good management of their own concerns. We should probably soon cease to hear of the drivers and the cart-whips, the overseers and the attorneys, of the West Indies, and the German managers of our refineries; for we may lay it down as a rule, from which there are few exceptions, that no business is in a sound state where the master does not understand his own business.

at least as well as any of his servants, or where he does not himself attend to it.

With respect to the second question, the monopoly of the home market; so long as the British Colonies produce more than Great Britain consumes, the price of the exported surplus will regulate the price of the whole, and will be itself regulated by the general price of Europe. It will, therefore, produce little effect on the prices in England, whether this exported surplus be 50,000 tons, or whether it be increased to 100,000 tons by 50,000 more being allowed to be sold in England, instead of going *direct* to the Continent. The bounty on the exportation of the refined goods keeps British Plantation sugar of the low and middling qualities about 6s. per cwt. above the price of Foreign sugar; but, as low or middling East-India sugar would have to pay 10s. more duty than West-India, and only have an advantage in the sale of 6s. per cwt. over the price of Foreign sugar, it is more advantageous by 4s. per cwt. to export such, than to sell it for home use: of course, none of that quality comes into the home market. Fine sugar in the British market is 10s. per cwt., or more, dearer than Foreign sugar, because the British market is inadequately supplied with fine sugar; and as the law stands, with an extra duty of 10s. per cwt., and a bounty which raises the price only 6s. per cwt., no East-India sugar whatever can come into the British market, excepting of that kind with which it may be inadequately supplied.

East-India sugar does interfere with the price of fine sugar, and keeps it something lower than it otherwise would be. This is all that the West-Indians can prove to be any injury to them : perhaps it may reduce the price of one-eighth or one-tenth part of the whole supply of West-India sugar ; but will any one say that fine sugar is not high enough ? It is the growers of coarse sugar who are suffering, and what injury do *these* sustain from an importation of East-India sugar ? nay, what injury could they sustain, even if admitted on the same terms of duty ?

Though at present none but the fine West-India sugar is at all affected by the importations from the East Indies ; yet as the consumption of sugar is on the increase, the time is not far distant, unless the growth be increased, when the British market will be inadequately supplied with all descriptions of sugar, as it now is with fine ; and then the two interests would doubtless interfere with each other. It is to such a period that the West Indians are looking, or there would be no interference worth their contending against : for they say, “ that although the preference they “ have in the home market is of little benefit “ to them, while the growth of their sugar so “ much exceeds the home consumption of the “ mother country, as to render them dependent “ on the European market ; *yet it may be valuable* “ *hereafter*, when their cultivation is reduced, as “ must soon be the case, if the present low price “ of sugar continues ; for the planter must then

"raise more provisions and less sugar*." According to this, a great present injury is to be done to this country and to India, which will be productive of "little benefit" to the West Indians, in order that the pursuit of that system may become valuable to the latter hereafter. We will examine into the probability of the occurrence of those circumstances which would make it valuable.

The consumption of sugar,

In 1700, was 15,000 tons.

1730,	42,000	...	an increase of 280 per cent.
1760,	58,000
1790,	81,000
1820,	150,000

The increase has not been regular, as will be seen by the above. In 1795 and 1797, it had fallen off fully 10,000 tons from what it was in 1790†. The rate of increase has been going on less rapidly in the last seven years owing to two periods of almost unparalleled distress, which even at this time is operating upon a large portion of

* J. Marryat's Reply, page 88.

† In the year 1822, there appears only to have been exported 18,739 tons of refined sugar, which, owing to a short crop in the West Indies, is less this year than the average of several preceding years. It may also be added, that the bounty which appears to have been paid on the exportation of refined sugar is 883,392*l. 7s. 6d.*: this difference may be owing to a small quantity of double refined being exported, and receiving a higher drawback. If I were to adopt this amount, the rate of bounty would appear higher.

the country—the agriculturists. The consumption, however, during the whole period of 120 years, has increased at an average rate of about 80 per cent. in thirty years, and about 85 per cent. in the last period. Supposing the quantity produced to remain stationary, and the consumption to go on increasing at its present rate, the whole of the surplus might be absorbed by the consumption in about four or five years. A diminished growth from the substitution of provisions for sugar would probably occasion some reduction in the quantity; but as the larger colonies already grow most of their provisions, the extent of such a change could not make any great difference in the whole supply.

There is another circumstance which at least *ought* to operate against this diminution. The slave population of the United States has increased at the rate of 125 per cent. in thirty years, and its exports of produce in a still greater proportion. If, then, the slaves in our colonies were not worse treated than they are in the United States, the increase of the growth would exceed the increase of consumption at the present prices, and in that case, the period when the West Indians would enjoy this prospective advantage would never arrive; for surely the continuance of the present oppressions and cruelties, which prevent the natural increase of the slaves, cannot be contemplated. A system destructive of the lives and happiness of the cultivators would be a horrible refinement on the Dutch system of destroying

their spices, in order to keep up the price*. This monopoly price, which is expected to be obtained when the supply shall become inadequate for the home consumption, has never been enjoyed by the planters: we have always exported sugar for at least 120 years; and they can urge no plea for monopoly either from precedent, or from investments made in the expectation of such monopoly price. They have no grounds for such a claim; nor will it ever be submitted to by the people of this country.

However ridiculous it may be, to look for remuneration from a price driven up by an inadequate supply of the home market, it may be interesting to know, what has been considered to be a remunerating price, what it is now said to be, and to what, upon the same principle and system, it may hereafter amount.

In Bryan Edwards's time, a net price of 15*l.* per hhd. of 16 cwt. was estimated to pay the planter seven per cent. on his capital, whilst at 13*l.* per hhd. of 13 cwt. the Antigua Petition, recently presented to the House of Commons, makes an actual loss of 18*s.* 11*d.* per cwt., when only six per cent. interest is charged. Hence, it appears, that whilst in the former period 18*s.* 9*d.* per cwt. would pay seven per cent, it would at the present period require 42*s.* per cwt. to pay the same rate of interest: and this great difference has no reference to any expenses after the

* See Appendix A.

sugar left the island, both being the net prices, after freight and all charges in this country had been deducted. From what can this great difference arise? No doubt, in great measure, from a deterioration of the soil (but of this hereafter), which requires more land and labour to produce the same quantity of sugar, and by which the cost of production is more than doubled in thirty years. If this were to go on, it would soon reach an enormous price.

That the Antigua estimate very nearly agrees with the general estimates, may be seen by the following facts. J. Marryat says, the present price only pays 1 per cent. The St. Vincent's Petition states, that 50s. per cwt. only pays $7\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. The full duty of 30s. per cwt. is not chargeable until the average price reaches 49s.; though the full bounty on export continues to be paid. The protecting duty on East-India sugar is not diminished until the price reaches 60s. per cwt., and does not entirely cease until the price reaches 69s. per cwt.

From all the preceding statements it appears, that 50s. per cwt. is the lowest price that would be considered a remuneration for the present system of cultivation in the West Indies; whilst to give even 27s. 11d., the average price of 1822, we pay about 6s. per cwt. more than the general price of Europe. To remunerate the planters, however, it seems we must give 22s. per cwt. additional, making altogether 28s. per cwt. more than the price at which we could have procured our sugar,

if the general markets of the world had been open to us ; and this price they will require for their whole crop, whether consumed at home or exported. We will suppose it to be 170,000 tons ; this, at 28*l.* per ton, would amount to 4,760,000*l.* per annum, and this sum we are called upon to sacrifice, to support the system of slave-cultivation in our colonies—a sacrifice exceeding in amount the value of all the colonies put together, even taken at their own extravagant statements ; and therefore, whatever they may have cost, they are, on this shewing of the proprietors, worth nothing at all, under their present wretched system of culture ; for their whole income, whatever it may be, must be taken out of the pockets of the people of Great Britain without any equivalent.

If it shall have been made clear, that there is *no hope* of their obtaining such enormous monopoly prices as would be sufficient to support their present system, I trust I shall be able to make it equally clear, that there would be *no doubt* of their obtaining ample relief from the better management of their own concerns.

Amongst the many unquestionable proofs of West-Indian mismanagement, is the fact of the increase of the slave population in the United States of America, compared with its actual diminution in the island of Jamaica. It appears, that in that island alone*, the population is less by 400,000

* See my Letter on the injurious Effect of High Prices, and the beneficial Effect of Low Prices, on the Condition of Slaves, pp. 15—19.

slaves than, under proper management, it ought to be. If the treatment in the other colonies has produced a similar effect (and we have no reason to suppose it has been of a better description), the whole loss will be 800,000 slaves. Speaking of them merely as property, and estimating their price at 50*l.* per head, this treatment has of itself occasioned a loss in property to the amazing extent of 40,000,000*l.* in the short space of thirty years only. Perhaps it will be said, that such an increase in the number of the slaves would diminish the price which they would bear in the market. Doubtless, it would : but on the other hand, the value of the land would be enhanced at least as much*. Are the people of England to be called upon to give an indemnity for neglect such as this (to give it no harsher term) in the price of the sugar which they consume?

I might enlarge much upon the loss which our West-Indian colonists have sustained in various ways, by pertinaciously adhering to the wretched system of cultivating their estates with "forced labourers," instead of hiring those labourers to perform the work for "their own profit." This subject, however, has been so ably treated in a recent publication, by Adam Hodgson, entitled, "a Letter to M. Jean Baptiste Say, on the Comparative Expense of Free and Slave Labour," that I shall only notice one curious fact

* See A. Hodgson's Letter to Jean Baptiste Say, on Free and Slave Labour, p. 13.

connected with it, which is stated in the Antigua Petition, and which is also known to exist in all our other West-Indian colonies. Bricks are enumerated amongst the supplies imported from this country. In deriving his supply of this article from this source, the *proprietor of slaves* pays from 5*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* per day to the *free labourer* of England for making them ; notwithstanding, the gross amount of the produce raised by the labour of 140 slaves, even with the benefit of the bounty, is only 1,427*l.*, or less than 7*d.* per day for the labour of each slave!! As Black men, when free, are paid the same wages for their work as White men in the United States of America, they are of course equally well able to make bricks ; and the Antigua planter has only to agree with his slaves to make them by task-work, and then he will obtain this article at half the price which he pays for it in England.

From the Antigua Petition, above referred to, it appears, that they buy Indian corn (of which the produce per acre is about double, and the price generally half that of wheat) at 6*s.* 9*d.* per bushel. What little fresh beef they do buy costs 9*d.* per lb. Oxen, 35*l.* per yoke ; horses, 50*l.* ; mules, 25*l.* ; and asses, 10*l.* each. An estate capable of producing one hundred hogsheads of sugar, according to Edwards, must contain three hundred acres, and that of good land, for it must be good land to produce sugar. Let any agriculturist calculate what rent an English farmer could afford to give for such an estate, where he

had to hire the labourer, and then let him say whether it be not a proof of gross mismanagement, when it is stated, that no profit is yielded where such prices as these can be obtained.

We next come to the food of the Negroes. Where this is not raised by themselves, as in Antigua, they are allowed nine pints of corn, weighing about fourteen ounces the pint, and five herrings each per week ; for one barrel will contain about seven hundred herrings, and this divided amongst 140 slaves makes five herrings each. This allowance of corn is as directed by the Melioration Act ; and though some may give more, yet they are not bound to do it ; and we may judge, from the character of a community which could pass such an act, and still make the allowance insufficient, how far its members, in general, are likely to exceed regulations of their own making.—The Manumission Society of New York, speaking of South Carolina, say,—“ The planters allow to each slave per week a peck (eight quarts) of Indian corn, five pounds of bacon, and a pint of molasses, with which they are perfectly satisfied : *but* in the upper country, where provisions are most abundant, the few slaves there fare nearly as well as their masters—they are neither tasked in their work, nor limited in their provisions.” The following is considered to be a necessary diet in the New-Bailey House of Correction at Manchester, and one cause of the non-appearance of infectious fevers for a long time past :

20 ounces of Bread per day.

1 quart of Oatmeal porridge for Breakfast.

With a Dinner,

Two days of the week $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Beef, 1 lb. Potatoes.

Two days $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. Potatoes.

Two days 1 quart Pea Soup.

One day 1 quart Ox-head Stew,
or Soup.

If we compare these three allowances of food, (the two last materially more than double that of Antigua,) we shall cease to wonder at the great cost of cultivation when performed by such half-starved beings.

The next thing which I shall notice is the charge, in the Antigua estimate, of about 250*l.* for oversight and management of an estate, the amount of all the produce of which, in the general market of Europe, and unaided by the English bounty, is only about 1,050*l.* sterling*. Let the English landowner say if he could afford to pay such a sum for the oversight and management of an estate of 150 to 200 acres, which, even at the present prices, would yield as much gross produce.

Another subject of the utmost importance, and which imperiously demands investigation and inquiry, is the gradual deterioration of the soils in

* The Antigua Petition states the gross produce, of the whole estate in question, to be 2,854*l.* currency, or 1,427*l.* sterling. If, from this, we deduct 6*s.* per cwt. from the sugar produced on the estate, which is raised so much by the bounty paid in this country, we shall have 1,037*l.* as the gross produce.

the West India islands: for nothing can be more certain, than that the system which gradually destroys the fertility of the soil, is itself on the high road to destruction. As this is the peculiar characteristic of slavery, it must also be its destruction, if it is not abolished by the humanity, good sense, and sound policy of the country. The deterioration of the soil in our West-India Colonies, and in America, wherever the slave system prevails, is so notorious, that it cannot be necessary to go into this subject at any length to prove that fact. In the Report from the House of Assembly of Jamaica, "the gradual deterioration "of his soil, which when new is fertile, and when "old is sterile," is urged as a reason why the planter cannot produce sugar cheaply. The Act, 58 Geo. III, cap. 49, recites, "That there was "in the Bahama islands, and in certain estates "in Dominica, a considerable quantity of land "which, from length of cultivation, had become "exhausted; and that it had, in consequence, "become impossible for the proprietor of such "land to find profitable employment and subsistence for his slaves." Some of the petitions recently presented to the House of Commons, from the West-India islands, state the same thing, and all who have travelled in those parts of the United States of America, where the land is cultivated by slaves, bear testimony to this fact.

If deterioration of soil was the uniform effect of long cultivation, and that this was apparent in the short period that our West-India islands have

been cultivated (for they did not produce half the quantity of sugar fifty years ago), then would the earth in a very short space of time become uninhabitable ; but the contrary is evidently the fact in this country, where well-managed lands are improving.

If it be said that sugar, cotton, and tobacco are exhausting crops, so may it also be said of wheat, barley, oats, and potatoes. The fertility of our soil is kept up by a change to green crops, and by stocking and manuring with cattle ; whilst the strength of our population is improved by eating them. An extract from the work of the Count de Vaublanc, which appeared lately in the Traveller, after mentioning a variety of instances of the superior productiveness of this country as compared with France, though the latter had naturally a superior soil and climate, adds, “In France, agriculture produces little, and “occasions tedious labours, because food fails ; “and it fails because there is too little cattle. “Because the cattle, and food for them, fail, we “want tallow, wool, leather, hemp, and cotton.”

From what has been before stated, two points would appear to be established ; and though I am not now seeking to advance these as new theories, but only to bring them forward as objects deserving of the fullest investigation, I do not myself entertain any doubt of their correctness. These points are, first, That the deterioration of the soil in our West-Indian colonies is not owing

to any thing peculiar to the cultivation of the cane, which would not apply to the cultivation of any other kind of agricultural produce, if treated in the same way, but to the system—to the want of proper management in changing the crops, and in not having upon the estates a sufficient number of cattle, from which a sufficient quantity of manure would be produced to keep up the fertility of the soil. Secondly, That the physical strength of the slaves is impaired by the want of a sufficient quantum of nutriment, to compensate for the exertions which they are compelled to make. Of these countries I may say as the Count de Vau-blanc has said of France, “Agriculture produces “little, and occasions tedious labours, because “food fails ; and it fails because there is too little “cattle. Because the cattle, and food for them, “fail, we want tallow, wool, and leather”— I would add, beef and mutton. If these were upon the estate, we should cease to hear of a deterioration of the soil : the Negroes would consume them, or wear their produce ; and being well fed, they would be enabled to perform that labour which is now unavailingly attempted to be drawn from them by the stimulus of the lash. To shew that this is not merely opinion, I shall add two extracts from a communication which I have received from an intelligent correspondent in the United States of America.

On the first point, my correspondent says,—“ A highly respectable Virginia planter informs me, “that he was induced to turn his attention to the

" cultivation of wheat, maize, hay, &c. as principal articles; and to make the raising of tobacco only secondary: and from this system he assured me he derived the greatest advantages, not only in the direct augmentation of his funds, but indirectly by improving the soil of his farm, the offal from the grain enabling him to keep a stock of cattle to furnish manure; whereas it is well known, that such are the exhausting effects of tobacco upon the soil, that after the land has produced it for a few years, it becomes so impoverished as not to yield a crop sufficient to defray the expense of cultivating and gathering, being, as it is termed, thrown out, or killed." On the second point, my correspondent says,— "A friend of unquestionable veracity near the city of Washington, stated last year, that a mill-dam belonging to a wealthy planter in the neighbourhood had been carried away by the ice, and he was applied to to rebuild it. The owner queried with him how long it would require to complete it, and was answered, that if my friend was allowed to provide for the Negroes, he would engage to finish the job in (I think) twenty days; to which the owner rejoined, You cannot do it in sixty: I am certain my Negroes will not be able to do it in less. My friend told him, that if they were fed and clothed as common, he himself did not believe they would do it in twice sixty; but that, if he was allowed to provide for them, he thought twenty days would be enough. It was agreed to, and he commenced the work.

" He purchased some barrels of good pork and
" beef, and other necessaries of life and suitable
" clothing for the season, and labour. *He fed the*
" *Negroes freely, clad them well, worked with them*
" *himself, and treated them kindly;* and to the
" astonishment of the planter and many of his
" neighbours, he completed the work within the
" specified time ; did it in a masterly manner, and
" secured the good will of the Negroes, who
" worked cheerfully and merrily, *and throve so*
" *well under the treatment, that at the expiration*
" *of the service, they were fatter and finer looking*
" *men than any on the plantation.*" Upon these
extracts I have only further to remark, that the
communication was made to me, without any intimation
on my part that could lead my informant
to give any facts or remarks in illustration of the
particular view of the subject which I have just
been taking.

Having shewn, not only by proofs, but also by the admission of the West Indians, that the preference in the market, and of course, the exclusion of East-India sugar, is of little or no present benefit to them ;—that they have never, for at least 120 years, enjoyed the power of raising the price, by reducing the quantity, so as to charge the people of England a high monopoly price, independent of the general market of Europe ; and that, in the present state of knowledge, such a thing would not be tolerated ;—having shewn, that, even if it would, it seems necessary to the attainment of this object that the present system of oppression, which pre-

vents the natural increase of the population, should be continued, which never can be endured ; and that, therefore, the exclusion of East-India sugar neither is at present, nor ever can be, of any advantage to the West-Indian planter ;—I might enter at length into the subject, to shew, on the other hand, that the admission of East-India sugar at the same duty as West-India will be a great advantage to the country. But this has been so well illustrated by the various publications which have recently appeared on the part of the advocates of the East-India interest, that it is unnecessary for me to do more than briefly advert to it.

If all the people in the British dominions were in the enjoyment of all that was necessary, or even desirable to themselves, a proposed extension of commerce could have no meaning or object. But if, by such extension, many of the comforts enjoyed by the higher and middling classes can be afforded to them at a less price ; and also be brought, by such reduction in price and increase of employment, more generally within the reach of the poor, it is a benefit which should not be rejected. If the plan of the West-Indians was pursued—that of diminishing, or not increasing, the growth of sugar, so that they might get a higher price than the present, from those who could afford to buy it—any such benefit would be entirely sacrificed.

The present consumption of sugar, being about 150,000 tons, affords to every individual in the British dominions rather less than seventeen

pounds per annum ; and as it is estimated that one individual may consume without extravagance fifty-six to eighty-four pounds of sugar, it is clear that the great bulk of the poor do obtain it in but very limited quantity ; not from any disinclination to use it, but from the want of power to obtain it. It may be reasonably estimated, that, if brought within their reach, a quantity very far beyond the produce of the West-India colonies would be consumed. That there would be a demand in the East Indies for our manufacturing industry, to an almost unlimited extent, may be inferred from the fact, that, if there were no duty on sugar, the native Indian, by raising sugar instead of manufacturing cotton cloth, would be able to exchange his sugar in this country for four or five pieces of cloth, whilst by his own hands he could only make one piece. That such would be the effects upon the comforts of the people of England, and upon manufacturing interests, is indisputable ; and it is equally indisputable, that through them most important benefits would be conferred upon the shipping, the commerce, and the revenue of the country *.

From some of the preceding statements, and the almost inconceivable want of management of the West Indians, it would appear, that they must have had the same disposition to stifle their own inquiry into their own concerns, as they now evince

* For a further elucidation of these subjects, I must refer to the Report of the Liverpool East-India Association.

to prevent parliamentary inquiry. If this can once be overcome, they would soon discover, that, under improved systems of management, they need not shrink from any competition, and there would remain no difficulty in making arrangements advantageous to them and to the country.

They have never had any advantage from the monopoly of the home market. They have had an apparent advantage in the bounty; but I believe, inasmuch as it has led them to the neglect of their own concerns, it has done them a real and serious injury. On this account, however their claims may be without support, on the ground of right, of sound policy, or of common sense, the protection should not be withdrawn hastily, or without due consideration. But, if from its present tendency to perpetuate a bad system, it can be turned into that of promoting an improvement; if, instead of perpetuating slavery, it can be made the price of gradual redemption; then it will have its foundation in humanity and sound policy, and on that ground may be expected to continue so long as the necessity for it exists. If we can substitute a system which will put more money into the pockets of the West Indians, whilst it leaves the revenue unimpaired, and will give to the people of England their sugar at a reduction of 3s. per cwt., I shall have made a proposal worthy of consideration. That this may be done, it is now my object to shew.

The present system, by holding out encouragement to the growth of sugar only, turns the in-

dustry of the planters unprofitably into that particular channel. According to J. Marryat, the whole of their profits can only be estimated at 3*s.* 5*d.* per cwt., or about one per cent. upon their capital; and according to the Antigua Petition, the present price yields nothing. Yet this country pays them 6*s.* per cwt. by means of the bounty on exportation. The sum thus drawn from the pockets of the people, or a part of it at least, is thrown away, and uselessly expended, in encouraging the planters to raise an article which after all pays them little or nothing.

The present system forces sugar into the refineries, so long as we have any thing to spare for exportatation. If, however, the time of this prospective monopoly advantage should ever arrive, the trade of refining for exportation must be entirely extinguished; but this system, so long as it lasts, has been shewn to be peculiarly impolitic, giving away 250,000*l.* per annum, not for the benefit of this country, but for that of foreign nations. And, whilst a bounty is paid on the production of an article by Slave cultivation, it prevents that change from slavery to freedom, which has always been preceded by a reduced value of labour; and, of course, is an insuperable obstacle to the attainment of that degree of prosperity and happiness, which has been the glorious result in every country where the change has been made.

To remove all these disadvantages, I would propose,

1st. To give up the bounty on the exportation of refined sugar ; and to substitute, for what the West Indians would lose by this, an absolute direct bounty of 6s. per cwt. on all sugar imported from the West-India colonies : this bounty not to be paid directly to the importer, but to be divided amongst the West-India proprietors, at the end of each year, according to the number of slaves now on the estates, as will appear by the Registry. By such arrangement, every proprietor would equally participate in the bounty, whatever change he might find it advantageous to make in his cultivation ; and thus all that was paid by the country would go direct and clear into the pockets of the planters, though they now admit that they get but little of it ;—

2d. To admit all sugars to entry at the duty of 30s. per cwt., whether the growth of the West Indies, British India, China, Siam, Java, Cuba, or the Brazils, attaching to the two latter the condition of the abolition of the Slave Trade ;—

3d. To encourage the refining business, by admitting all sugars to be refined in bond ; charging the duty on entering for home use, which should be moderate on the refined, and low, or none at all, on the molasses. This arrangement would operate as a bounty on the refining business, and would be an equitable and beneficial arrangement to the growers of low sugar, and to the consumers of molasses, and, being founded on principles of equity and sound policy, would be likely to be permanent.

The produce of the revenue would not be materially affected. It forms no necessary part of the plan that it should be so at all ; but to shew the effect, I will estimate the present revenue on 150,000 tons, at 27*l.* per ton *L.* 4,050,000

The Bounty on Export paid in 1822 was 189,218 <i>l.</i> ; but on an average of years about	250,000
Net revenue,	<u><i>L.</i> 3,800,000</u>

If from a gradual increase of the consumption now going on, and from a further increase, which might be expected from extended commerce and some reduction in price, we may calculate on 160,000 tons at 30*s.* per ton.
the revenue would be *L.* 4,800,000

Suppose the importation of Sugar from the British West Indies to be reduced something below the average produce, say to 170,000 tons, a bounty of 6 <i>s.</i> per cwt. would be	1,020,000
Net revenue,	<u><i>L.</i> 3,780,000</u>

That the bounty on West-India sugar may not continue after it is no longer required by the planters, the rate might be reduced 1*s.* per cwt. when the growth reached 200,000 tons, and 1*s.* per cwt. for every increase of 5,000 tons afterwards ; so that it would entirely cease when the growth should have reached 225,000 tons ; which, from what we see in the United States from the

effects of improved treatment, and from natural increase of the slaves, might soon be expected.

This arrangement, of giving up the bounty on exportation, would reduce the price about 6s. per cwt.; but the duty being raised to 30s. would be an increase of 5s.; leaving the price about 3s. per cwt. lower to the consumer, without either loss to the revenue or to the planter; thus shewing the good effects of turning a bounty to our own benefit, instead of to that of our neighbours.

A bounty thus given, attached to regulations for the melioration in the condition, and final emancipation of, the slaves, would be consistent with sound policy. It would hasten the progress of the British colonies to that state of improvement, when they would no longer require pecuniary support from the mother country; but, with a prosperity, founded on the adoption of the best and most economical systems, enjoying their natural advantages, they would successfully contend with the productions of any other country. Instead of being under-sold by the colonies of Spain and Portugal, we should force them to give up the importation of slaves, and to adopt our improvements, or to be driven out of the markets of the world.

It now remains with the people of this country to choose whether they will, *without investigation*, submit to the enormous pecuniary sacrifices which, according to the West-Indian estimates, it will require to support them in their present system; whether we will restrain the industry of England,

and close up against her the boundless resources of India ; whether we will cramp our own energies, and submit to enormous pecuniary sacrifices, for no other purpose than to support the expense of holding in chains of bondage 800,000 of our fellow-beings ;—or whether we will adopt an enlightened policy, suited to the times and the age in which we live.

APPENDIX.

A. (see p. 14.)

IN some of the smaller islands, where there is little uncultivated land, the introduction of cattle, and of better diet for an increased population of slaves, might lessen the produce of sugar, though in some districts of this country the improved system of culture has increased the produce, not only of cattle, but of corn also. In the larger islands there is much land which an increased population would bring into cultivation. In some of the colonies, as Demerara, good land is in almost boundless extent. When, then, a redundant population in any of the islands caused the slaves to be set free, they would be attracted by the employment which the fertile soils of Demerara would always be sure to afford : so that, upon the whole, it may not be unreasonable to expect, that the same cause which has produced so large an exportation of cotton from the United States may also produce a large exportation of sugar from the West-India colonies.

B.

SINCE the preceding pages were printed, a pamphlet has come out, entitled "Claims of the West-India Colonies to a protecting Duty on East-India Sugar." It is scarcely possible to conceive that any reader, however inattentive, can be so far misled as to suppose that the case of the West-Indians is at all mended by this production ; or that the advocates of free trade have received any injury from it, unless it were to induce some of them uselessly to occupy their time in answering its often-refuted arguments and its glaring absurdities. There is certainly one good feature in the pamphlet,—that the writer studiously avoids making use of the term *slavery*, as applied to the West-India colonies. This looks well : if the West Indians themselves are ashamed of, and shrink from, the use of the term SLAVE, it is pretty clear that they are aware of the feelings of the country ; and

we may be assured that an institution cannot last long when those connected with it avoid mentioning its name.

In the extracts of the Proclamations which he gives, there is nothing about the right to hold men in slavery. One of these speaks of people who transport themselves thither ; another, of persons brought, and to be brought, and their children ; and all these are to be free. These proclamations are curious, and deserve investigation, for there is a marked difference between people being *brought* and *transporting themselves*. If he shall prove that the laws of England are in force in the colonies, which it is one of his objects to prove, he will have made good one step towards proving the colonies an integral part of the British Empire, and entitled to the same protection as her agriculturists and manufacturers ; but if he does this, the slaves must all be made free, and their expensive system changed for a better, in which case they would need no protection. But when we talk about protection to our Agriculturists, do we mean that something is to be done for their benefit to the injury of others ; or is it not rather, that, as they pay taxes in various ways, direct and indirect, the corn of foreigners (who do not pay such taxes) is either restricted from interfering with them, or must pay an equivalent in duty. When the Agriculturists were in distress, the cause of it was diligently inquired into ; and surely the East Indians, or the advocates of free trade, do not wish to deprive the West Indians of this participation in the privilege and advantages of the Agriculturists, with whom they are so desirous to be classed ; but let it be remembered, that the result of this investigation, undertaken on the ground of general good, and not to promote the advantage of one class at the expense of another, ended in reducing, and not in raising, the protecting price.

One object of the pamphlet is to avert the grievous injury, if not total ruin, which will fall upon the West-Indian cultivators, if they should be exposed to an open competition with the cultivators of the East, and yet nearly one half of the author's labours have been expended in endeavouring to shew that the production of sugar is *more expensive* in the East than in the West !! If the writer believed his own statement, he might have spared himself this trouble. He adds one more to the list of those who have, with so much sagacity, been endeavouring to persuade us that it is for our advantage to go to the dear market for the articles we consume ; because, if we do, the sellers will be able to take a greater quantity of such of our own goods as we have to offer in return ; forgetting that what we save in this way, we shall have the benefit of using ourselves, or of exchanging

for some other article which we want. We are here once more reminded how much the West Indians contribute to the revenue by the duties on their productions. Yet, so anxious are they to continue this contribution, that the object of this work is to prevent the East Indians from participating in the payment. Upon this principle, how disinterested are the planters in Virginia, who, after having contributed to support their own government, are so anxious to send their tobacco here, which pays such an enormous duty, for the support of ours !!

This writer revives the exploded notion that a joint stock company can carry on trade to greater advantage than private individuals !!

He lays before us a great mass of what he terms respectable evidence, given before the opening of the trade with India, to shew that that country could not afford a market for an increased quantity of our manufactures—for what purpose, does the reader think?—to disprove a fact as notorious as the sun at noon day, that the increase of the demand from that quarter has actually been great beyond any former example!! This can only be compared to a man, who had been wet to the skin by exposure to heavy rain, being told that he must be mistaken, for that Moore's Almanack had long since predicted fair weather on that day.

We are told that East-Indian iron is subject to a duty of 20 per cent. in this country, and we have a long tirade upon the advantage it would be to this country if it were admitted free of duty, but that the just claims of the iron-masters forbid that. The taking off this duty would give very little alarm to a body of men who are supplying iron to India itself!!—The alarm is again sounded to the ship-owners; who are told of the loss which *they* would sustain—from having to carry *an increased quantity of sugar from a greater distance*.

Such and so glaring are the absurdities manifest throughout the whole work, that it would be a waste of time to attempt a serious reply.